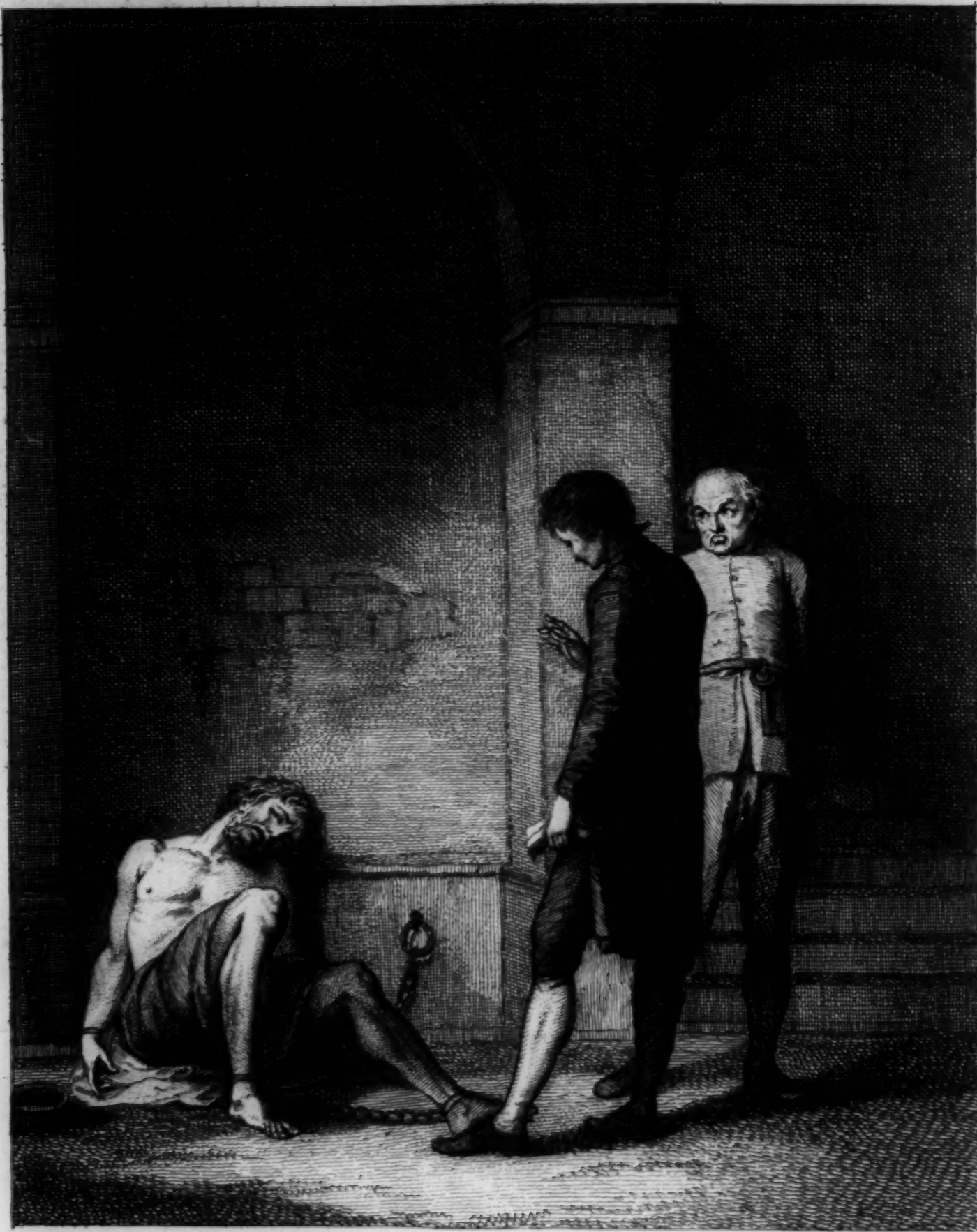




Vide Howard on Prisons, Page 82—Octavo Edition.

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O D E,

INSCRIBED TO

JOHN HOWARD, Esq. F. R. S.

AUTHOR OF

"The State of English and Foreign Prisons."

ΠΟΛΕΣΙΝ ΕΥΘΕΛΗΣ ΠΟΝΟΣ.

EURIPIDES.

By WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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O D E, &c.

FAV'RITE of Heaven, and friend of Earth !
Philanthropy, benignant Power !
Whose sons display no doubtful worth,
The pageant of the passing hour !
Teach me to paint, in deathless song,
Some darling from thy filial throng,
Whose deeds no party-rage inspire,
But fill th' agreeing world with one desire,
To echo his renown, responsive to my lyre !

Ah! whither lead'st thou?—whence that sigh?
 What fount of woe my bosom jars?
 Why pass, where Misery's hollow eye
 Glares wildly thro' those gloomy bars?
 Is Virtue sunk in these abodes,
 Where keen Remorse the heart corrodes;
 Where Guilt's base blood with frenzy boils,
 And Blasphemy the mournful scene embroils?—
 From this infernal gloom my shudd'ring soul recoils.

But whence those sudden sacred beams?
 Oppression drops his iron rod!
 And all the bright'ning dungeon seems
 To speak the presence of a God.
 Philanthropy's descending ray
 Diffuses unexpected day!
 Loveliest of angels!—at her side
 Her favourite votary stands;—her English pride,
 Thro' Horror's mansions led by this celestial guide.

Hail!

Hail! generous HOWARD! tho' thou bear:
 A name which Glory's hand sublime
 Has blazon'd oft, with guardian care,
 In characters that fear not Time;
 For thee she fondly spreads her wings;
 For thee from Paradise she brings,
 More verdant than her laurel bough,
 Such wreaths of sacred Palm, as ne'er till now
 The smiling Seraph twin'd around a mortal brow.

That Hero's * praise shall ever bloom,
 Who shielded our insulted coast;
 And launch'd his light'ning to consume
 The proud Invader's routed host.
 Brave perils rais'd his noble name:
 But thou deriv'st thy matchless fame
 From scenes, where deadlier danger dwells;
 Where fierce Contagion, with affright, repels
 Valor's advent'rous step from her malignant cells.

* CHARLES HOWARD, Earl of Nottingham.

Where in the dungeon's loathsome shade,
 The speechless Captive clanks his chain,
 With heartless hope to raise that aid
 His feeble cries have call'd in vain :
 Thine eye his dumb complaint explores ;
 Thy voice his parting breath restores ;
 Thy cares his ghastly visage clear
 From Death's chill dew, with many a clotted tear,
 And to his thankful soul returning life endear.

What precious Drug, or stronger Charm,
 Thy constant fortitude inspires
 In scenes, whence, muttering her alarm,
 Med'cine *, with selfish dread, retires ?
 Nor Charm, nor Drug, dispel thy fears :
 Temperance, thy better guard, appears :
 For thee I see her fondly fill
 Her crystal cup from Nature's purest rill ;
 Chief nourisher of life ! best antidote of ill !

* *Muffabat tacito Medecina timore.*

LUCRETIVS.

I see the hallow'd shade of HALES *,
 Who felt, like thee, for human woe,
 And taught the health-diffusing gales
 Thro' Horror's murky cells to blow,
 As thy protecting angel wait ;
 To save thee from the snares of Fate,
 Commiffion'd from the Eternal Throne :
 I hear him praise, in wonder's warmest tone,
 The virtues of thy heart, more active than his own.

* STEPHEN HALES, minister of Teddington : he died at the age of 84, 1761, and has been justly called " An ornament to his profession, as a clergyman, " and to his country, as a philosopher." I had the happiness of knowing this excellent man, when I was very young ; and well remember the warm glow of benevolence which used to animate his countenance, in relating the success of his various projects for the benefit of mankind. I have frequently heard him dwell with great pleasure on the fortunate incident which led him to the discovery of his Ventilator, to which I have alluded.—He had ordered a new floor for one of his rooms ; his carpenter not having prepared the work so soon as he expected, he thought the season improper for laying down new boards, when they were brought to his house, and gave orders for their being deposited in his barn ;—from their accidental position in that place, he caught his first idea of this useful invention.

Thy

Thy soul supplies new funds of health
 That fail not, in the trying hour,
 Above Arabia's spicy wealth
 And Pharmacy's reviving power.
 The transports of the generous mind,
 Feeling its bounty to mankind,
 Inspirit every mortal part ;
 And, far more potent than precarious art,
 Give radiance to the eye, and vigor to the heart.

Blest HOWARD ! who like thee can feel
 This vital spring in all its force ?
 New star of philanthropic zeal ;
 Enlight'ning nations in thy course !
 And shedding Comfort's heavenly dew
 On meagre Want's deserted crew !
 Friend to the wretch, whom friends disclaim,
 Who feels stern Justice, in his famish'd frame,
 A persecuting fiend beneath an angel's name.

Authority !

Authority ! unfeeling power,
 Whose iron heart can coldly doom
 The Debtor, drag'd from Pleasure's bower,
 To sicken in the dungeon's gloom !
 O might thy terror-striking call,
 Profusion's sons alone enthrall !
 But thou canst Want with Guilt confound :
 Thy bonds the Man of virtuous toil surround,
 Driven by malicious Fate within thy dreary bound.

How savage are thy stern decrees ?
 Thy cruel minister I see
 A weak, laborious victim seize,
 By worth entitled to be free !
 Behold, in the afflicting strife,
 The faithful partner of his life,
 In vain thy ruthless servant court,
 To spare her little children's sole support,
 Whom this terrific form has frighten'd from their sport.

B

Nor

Nor weeps she only from the thought,
 Those infants must no longer share
 His aid, whose daily labour bought
 The pittance of their scanty fare.
 The horrors of the loathsome jail
 Her inly-bleeding heart assail:
 E'en now her fears, from fondness bred,
 See the lost partner of her faithful bed
 Drop, in that murd'rous scene, his pale, expiring head.

Take comfort yet in these keen pains,
 Fond mourner! check thy gushing tears!
 The dungeon now no more contains
 Those perils which thy fancy fears:
 No more Contagion's baleful breath
 Speaks it the hideous cave of Death:
 HOWARD has planted safety there;
 Pure minister of light! his heavenly care
 Has purg'd the damp of Death from that polluted air.

Nature!

Nature! on thy maternal breast
 For ever be his worth engrav'd!
 Thy bosom only can attest
 How many a life his toil has sav'd:
 Nor in thy rescued Sons alone,
 Great Parent! this thy guardian own!
 His arm defends a dearer slave;
 Woman, thy darling! 'tis his pride to save*
 From evils, that surpass the horrors of the grave.

Ye sprightly nymphs, by Fortune nurs'd,
 Who sport in Joy's unclouded air,
 Nor see the distant storms, that burst
 In ruin on the humble Fair;

* Mr. HOWARD has been the happy instrument of preserving female prisoners from an infamous and indecent outrage.—It was formerly a custom in our gaols to load their legs and thighs with irons, for the detestable purpose of extorting money from these injured sufferers.—This circumstance, unknown to me when the Ode was written, has tempted me to introduce the few additional stanzas, as it is my ardent wish to render this tribute to an exalted character as little unworthy as I can of the very extensive and sublime merit which it aspires to celebrate.

Ye know not to what bitter smart
 A kindred form, a kindred heart,
 Is often doom'd, in life's low vale,
 Where frantic fears the simple mind assail,
 And fierce afflictions press, and friends and fortune fail.

See yon' sweet rustic, drown'd in tears !
 It is not Guilt—'tis Misery's flood,
 While dire Suspicion's charge she hears
 Of shedding infant, filial blood :
 Nature's fond dupe ! but not her foe !
 That form, that face, the falsehood shew :---
 Yet Law exacts her stern demand ;
 She bids the dungeon's grating doors expand,
 And the young captive faints beneath the gaoler's hand.

Ah, ruffian ! cease thy savage aim !
 She cannot 'scape thy harsh controul :
 Shall iron load that tender frame,
 And enter that too-yielding soul ?—

Unfeeling

Unfeeling wretch ! of basest mind !
 To misery deaf, to beauty blind !
 I see thy victim vainly plead ;
 For the worst fiend of hell's malignant breed,
 Extortion, grins applause, and prompts thy ruthless deed.

With brutal force, and ribbald jest,
 Thy manacles I see thee shake ;
 Mocking the merciful request,
 That Modesty and Justice make :
 E'en Nature's shriek, with anguish strong,
 Fails to suspend the impious wrong ;
 Till HOWARD's hand, with brave disdain,
 Throws far away this execrable chain :
 O Nature, spread his fame thro' all thy ample reign !

His Care, exulting BRITAIN found
 Here first display'd, not here confin'd !

No single tract of earth could bound
 The active virtues of his mind.
 To all the lands, where'er the tear,
 That mourn'd the Prisoner's wrongs severe,
 Sad Pity's glitt'ning cheek impearl'd,
 Eager he steer'd, with every sail unfurl'd,
 A friend to every clime ! a Patriot of the World !

'Ye nations thro' whose fair domain
 Our flying sons of joy have past,
 By Pleasure driven with loosen'd rein,
 Astonish'd that they flew so fast !
 How did the heart-improving fight
 Awake your wonder and delight,
 When, in her unexampled chace,
 Philanthropy outstript keen Pleasure's pace,
 When with a warmer soul she ran a nobler race !

Where-

Where-e'er her generous Briton went,
 Princes his supplicants became :
 He seem'd the enquiring angel, sent
 To scrutinize their secret shame*.
 Captivity, where he appear'd,
 Her languid head with transport rear'd ;
 And gazing on her godlike guest,
 Like those of old, whom Heaven's pure servant blest,
 E'en by his shadow seem'd of demons dispossess'd.

Amaz'd her foreign children cry,
 Seeing their patron pass along ;
 " O ! who is he, whose daring eye
 Can search into our hidden wrong ?
 What monarch's Heaven-directed mind,
 With royal bounty unconfin'd,

* I am credibly informed that several Princes, or at least persons in authority, requested Mr. Howard not to publish a minute account of some prisons, which reflected disgrace on their government.

Has tempted Freedom's son to share
 These perils ; searching with an angel's care
 Each cell of dire Disease, each cavern of Despair ?"

No monarch's word, nor lucre's lust,
 Nor vain ambition's restless fire,
 Nor ample power, that sacred trust !
 His life-diffusing toils inspire :
 Rous'd by no voice, save that whose cries
 Internal bid the soul arise
 From joys, that only seem to bless,
 From low pursuits, which little minds possess,
 To Nature's noblest aim, the Succour of Distress !

Taught by that God, in Mercy's robe,
 Who his coelestial throne resign'd,
 To free the prison of the globe
 From vice, th' oppressor of the mind !
 For thee, of misery's rights bereft,
 For thee, Captivity ! he left

Inviting

Inviting Ease, who, in her bower,
 Bade him with smiles enjoy the golden hour,
 While Fortune deck'd his board with Pleasure's festive
 flower.

While to thy virtue's utmost scope
 I boldly strive my aim to raise
 As high as mortal hand may hope
 To shoot the glittering * shaft of Praise ;
 Say ! HOWARD, say ! what may the Muse,
 Whose melting eye thy merit views,
 What guerdon may her love design ?
 What may she ask for thee, from Power Divine,
 Above the rich rewards which are already thine ?

Sweet is the joy when Science flings
 Her light on philosophic thought ;
 When Genius, with keen ardor, springs
 To clasp the lovely truth he sought :

• ανδρα δ' εγω χεινον
 Αινησαι μενοιων, ελπομαι
 Μη χαλκοπαρον ακονθ' ωσει τ' αγω-
 νος βαλειν εξω παλαμα δονων. PINDAR.

Sweet is the joy, when Rapture's fire
 Flows from the spirit of the lyre ;
 When Liberty and Virtue roll
 Spring-tides of fancy o'er the poet's soul,
 That waft his flying bark thro' seas above the pole.

Sweet the delight, when the gall'd heart
 Feels Consolation's lenient hand
 Bind up the wound from Fortune's dart
 With Friendship's life-supporting band !
 And sweeter still, and far above
 These fainter joys, when purest Love
 The soul his willing captive keeps !
 When he in bliss the melting spirit steeps,
 Who drops delicious tears, and wonders that he weeps !!

But not the brightest joy, which Arts,
 In floods of mental light, bestow ;
 Nor what firm Friendship's zeal imparts,
 Blest antidote of bitterest woe !

Nor those that Love's sweet hours dispense,
 Can equal the ecstatic sense,
 When, swelling to a fond excess,
 The grateful praises of reliev'd distress,
 Re-echoed thro' the heart, the soul of Bounty bless.

These transports, in no common state,
 Supremely pure, sublimely strong,
 Above the reach of envious fate,
 Blest HOWARD ! these to thee belong :
 While years encreasing o'er thee roll,
 Long may this sunshine of the soul
 New vigor to thy frame convey !
 Its radiance thro' thy noon of life display,
 And with sereneest light adorn thy closing day !

And when the Power, who joys to save,
 Proclaims the guilt of earth forgiven ;
 And calls the prisoners of the grave
 To all the liberty of Heaven :

In that bright day, whose wonders blind
 The eye of the astonish'd mind;
 When life's glad angel shall resume
 His ancient sway, announce to Death his doom,
 And from existence drive that tyrant of the tomb:

In that blest hour, when Seraphs sing
 The triumphs gain'd in human strife;
 And to their new associates bring
 The wreaths of everlasting life:
 May'st thou, in Glory's hallow'd blaze,
 Approach the Eternal Fount of Praise,
 With those who lead the angelic van,
 Those pure adherents to their Saviour's plan,
 Who liv'd but to relieve the Miseries of Man!

F I N I S.

